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RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 000478

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/02/2017

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SUBJECT: TURKISH MFA COMPLAINT ABOUT SENATE RESOLUTION ON
HRANT DINK

Classified By: AMBASSADOR ROSS WILSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶1. (c) Turkish MFA U/S Apakan called in Ambassador March 2 regarding the Senate draft resolution on the Hrant Dink assassination that has been introduced by Sen. Biden.

¶2. (c) Reading from a Washington embassy report, Apakan noted that S-Res 65 is listed publicly on the SFRC agenda for March ¶6. It contains language about Dink having been prosecuted "for speaking about the Armenian genocide." Turkey, which has been giving priority attention to the draft House resolution on the Armenian genocide itself, was surprised by this. While the resolution as a whole is unobjectionable, Turkey asks that this phrase, or at least its reference to Armenian genocide, be removed. Just like the House language, the resolution as it now stands will have negative implications for US-Turkish relations and for public opinion at a time when our governments need to cooperate in confronting common problems in Iraq and elsewhere.

¶3. (c) Apakan said he understood that Turkish Ambassador Sensoy had spoken with A/S Fried regarding the matter and appreciated that the Administration is aware of it. An aide noted that a similar House resolution on Dink (introduced by Rep. Crowley) had been revised weeks ago to delete the genocide reference. He said that Turkey hopes for the same this time.

¶4. (c) Ambassador said the he will report the MFA's concern to Washington. He said there is some discussion of opposing in this resolution the specific rsue that he felt should be dealt with by Turks and Armenians directly. One of the two prosecutions of Dink dealt with this. In 2005, Dink was convicted for insulting Turkishness under Article 301. At issue was an article in Dink's Agos newspaper that contained a sentence discussing Armenian and Turkish blood. Dink contended publicly that the sentence had been misunderstood and that the point of the article was that Armenians should get over their obsession with genocide recognition. A second, 2006 Article 301 case was more problematic. It involved remarks by Dink to Reuters: "Of course, I'm saying it was genocide. Because its consequences show it to be true and to label it so." It was not clear that that this had ever moved beyond the stage of filing charges to court proceedings, but it is difficult to contend that, factually, this is not "prosecution for having spoken about the genocide." Ambassador reminded Apakan of our repeated urgings, and those of senior Washington officials, visiting members of Congress and others, to change Article ¶301. There remained an opportunity, and Turkey should take it.

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WILSON